

STERLING AGRICULTURE COMMISSION  
MONTHLY MEETING  
Tuesday, June 10th, 2014 at 7:30pm  
Sterling Town Hall  
1183 PLAINFIELD PIKE, ROOM #15

NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY July 8th 2014

AGENDA

- I. CALL TO ORDER: Meeting was called to order at 7:40 PM
- II. ROLL CALL/INTRODUCTIONS:
  - Chair - Andrew Meek – Present
  - Vice Chair – Amy Kemp - Absent
  - Secretary -- Kelly Dennis
  - Regular - Betsy Molodich - Absent
  - Regular - Robin Cousens - Absent
  - Regular - Verna Cole - Present
  - Regular - Megan Johnson – Present
  - Alternate – Howard Hopps – Present
  - Ex officio -- Russell Gray – Absent
- III. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS: No comments.
- IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
- V. UNFINISHED/CONTINUING BUSINESS
  - a. K. Dennis will re-circulate February minutes and A. meek will circulate other meeting minutes for approval at July's meeting.
  - b. Discussion by Elisabeth Moore of CT Farmland Trust of Conservation Easements. CT Farmland Trust not funded by state, but by private donations; her position is funded by an outreach grant.
  - c. Main points relevant to Sterling farmers and agriculture producers:
    1. Sterling among the top 10 towns identified as wanted by the state for this smaller land program
    2. Conditions/requirements for Town participation already met by Sterling:
    3. Establish an Agriculture Commission (2009);
    4. Importance of agriculture to the town recognized in the 2009 POCD;
    5. Inventory of local farmland resources, including 409 resources (performed by Ag Commission 2008 survey);
    6. Local funding mechanism (\$1.00 included in Town budget);

7. Soil assessment submitted to Natural Resources in Tolland.

Remaining to be done to qualify for program:

1. Establish ranking criteria for producers (Moore can provide examples);
2. Town official submits application indicating that we are interested in participating in the program.

Important notes:

1. **Application to participate does *not* commit the Town to funding/budgeting the 25% for Trust partnership purchases nor to agree to anything; it merely gives us *access* to Trust Partnership program resources, including land trust grants (e.g., Windham land trust or possibly RI adjacent property trusts) *AND* to keep open the Town's future options.**
2. Initial proposed projects that do best are properties that are very visible and that community would be upset if they were lost: What properties do people in the town identify as central, as having a connection to, or that local and regional communities travel to, e.g., Scenic route 14, Ekonk Hill, etc.;
3. *Protected properties tend to increase the value of adjacent properties, rather than decrease them.*

## VI. NEW BUSINESS

Next meeting:

- Family Day
- Farm Day
- Invite FFA Member to assume non-voting seat on the Ag Commission as previously voted.

## VII. ANY OTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE COMMISSION

VIII. ADJOURNMENT M. Johnson moves to adjourn, V. Cole seconds. Adjourned at 7:46.